

SATURDAY NIGHT

CHRISTMAS LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

HAROLD F. SUTTON, EDITOR

TORONTO, CANADA, DECEMBER 1, 1957

Noblest Roman

BY B. K. SANDWELL

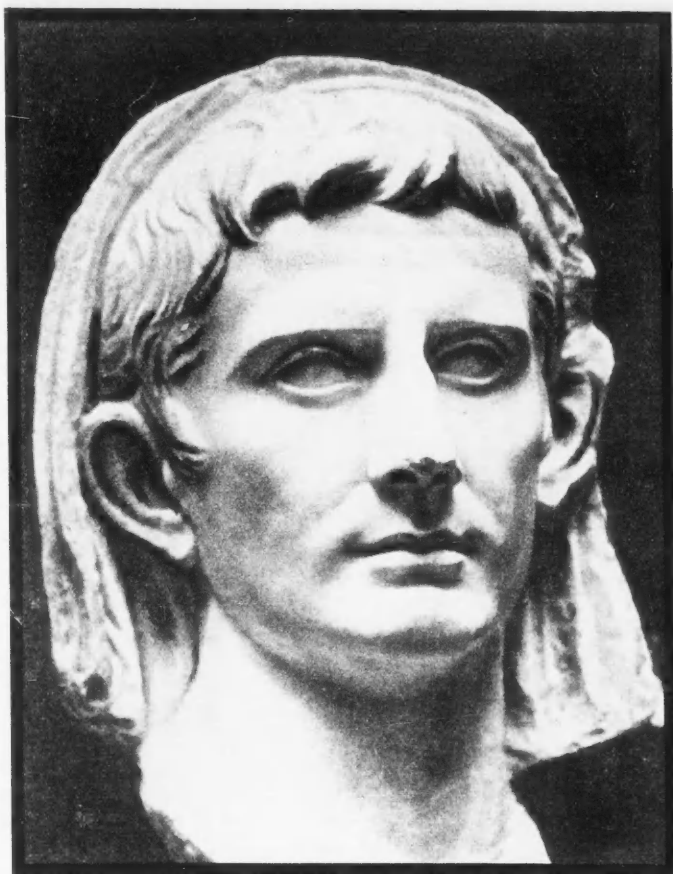
"Augustus," by John Buchan. Toronto, Musson, \$5.

WITH Brutus perished the republican cause, for he alone of its leaders had the moral authority which can dignify stagnation and reaction. . . . He remains the 'noblest Roman' when in truth he was a commonplace example of aristocratic virtues and vices." For these and other passages Lord Tweedsmuir has been accused of Fascist tendencies; and it is at least true that these and other passages will be seized on by friends of Fascism as arguments for their cause. But the fall of the Roman Republic is not, in the hands of any writer, very pleasant reading for a lover of democracy, and Lord Tweedsmuir does no more than face its issues fearlessly and without prejudice. It was not Octavian, afterwards Augustus, who destroyed the Republic; it destroyed itself, and he rescued Rome and the Roman world from a much worse tyranny. If there is any parallel to be drawn between Rome after Julius Caesar's assassination and Italy or Germany today, the parallel is not with what actually happened, the victory of Octavian, but with what might have happened, the victory of Antony.

There is a sense in which it is perfectly permissible to say that as a historian Lord Tweedsmuir is a great novelist; but it is not the wise-cracking sense. What one means by that is simply that his interest is always on the great figure, the eminent personality, and not in the great, deep, mysterious forces which determine the success and failure of men and systems alike. His last great personality was Cromwell, and it was the man, and not the Puritan Revolution, that interested him. There is little in either book about the social and economic stresses of the times, the things in which the presently predominant school of history-writing takes chief delight; such things do not make drama. Lord Tweedsmuir is attracted to Augustus as he was attracted to Cromwell, by the admirable and powerful elements of his character, not by the system of government which he established, and which his successors, again as with Cromwell, failed to carry on. There were reasons why Republicanism, in Augustus' time, was bound to be synonymous with "stagnation and reaction," reasons why even Brutus himself could not and did not dignify it; but Lord Tweedsmuir is not concerned with them. The fact that Brutus collected interest at 48 per cent, from a Cypriot town in the depths of misery interests him as a light on his character, but not in the least as a light on the character of the Republicanism of which he was the leader.

Economics is not as exclusively important to history as the Marxists maintain, but neither is it as unimportant as Lord Tweedsmuir's neglect would suggest. However, if he concerns himself little about Mr. Average Man's wages and cost of living, he concerns himself greatly and very studiously about his beliefs and attitudes and traditions: the things which go to make up the common mind of the people. And naturally, for this common mind is the instrument upon which your political Great Man plays his tunes, and

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AUGUSTUS

Reproduced from the jacket of "Augustus," by John Buchan.

Books For Children

BY MARGARET LAWRENCE

MAZO DE LA ROCHE has given us another book about Gillian and Diggory just in time to remind us of the children at Christmas. It is not that any of us need much reminding, and if we do, the Santa Claus parades, and the presence of the children at the recent Book Fair in Toronto would be sufficient reminder. To the Book Fair the children came in crowds and with as much enthusiasm as they welcomed Santa Claus on the streets of Toronto a few days ago. When we see children in crowds we become sentimental over the young of the race. We mellow and sometimes feel sad, wondering what the future holds in store for the young things so ardently taking to life with complete trust in its goodness. We tend to forget them as individuals. At the Book Fair, however, the individuality of the children stood out sharply. They caught the autograph epidemic. Some of the adults standing around, stray authors and officials, entered into it with zest and signed their names willingly. But a few stood off, perhaps having hidden fears of possible blackmail use some children might put their august signatures to. One man in particular was very high-hat, and a little pig-tailed girl decided it would be a triumph to get his signature. She went blandly up to him and asked him if he had a pencil, and he said, yes, of course he had a pencil, and thereupon she produced her pro-

gram and commanded him to sign. Which he did. The lassie has a fine future, indubitably. Nothing will ever back her down.

It is the fine drawing of child character which makes Mazo de la Roche's books about children small masterpieces. Her children have natures of their own. They are not just the young of the race, but are little people. In "The Very House" Gillian and Diggory are older than they were in "Beside a Norman Tower." Gillian has started to school, and takes much pleasure in being the possessor of an umbrella of her own. Diggory is no longer a baby toddling into life, but is a small man, having a loud say about the world and what it offers to him in the way of entertainment. There are two dogs, and a mother and an aunt. There are houses and trains and ocean liners. But most of all there is the highly exciting and excited conversation of two children trying to make themselves clear to adults.

It is no easy matter. The best quality about the book lies in the peculiar fact that it ranks both as adult literature, and at the same time could be read to and by children. Adults see the fine integrity of the portraiture of children, and the complex artistry of the writer, who is able to make the story simple. Children will certainly feel they have made two new friends. Because Gillian and

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Alas, Poor Country

BY L. A. MACKAY

"My Scotland," by A. G. MacDonell. Toronto, Oxford, \$2.50.

"My Ireland," by Lord Dunsany. Toronto, Oxford, \$2.50.

THESE books should be read together, in the order named. They will naturally appeal more directly to anyone with a touch of Scottish or Irish blood, but they raise in vivid and dramatic form a problem that is vital and increasingly urgent for all Canadians, the problem of the proper extent and true nature of political autonomy in a Commonwealth. They are both stimulating and provocative books, the one flamboyantly, the other subtly provocative.

Mr. MacDonell's book will infuriate many a professional Scot, for it is one of the most ruthless and outspoken essays in realistic criticism in modern Scottish literature, which is at last showing a long overdue tendency to open its eyes. But no fair-minded reader can fail to be moved by the vehement and aggressive patriotism that fills the book, and the complacent smugness into which the Scot has so largely degenerated needs sharp medicine. Many an ear in Canada should burn to be reminded that "there are few sights so repugnant to the Gael as a woman in a kilt," or to read of "the nasty little girls disguised as the warriors of Killiecrankie, among the dances of fighting-men."

The main thesis of the book, supported by a wealth of argument, is that Scotland must regain a larger measure of independence, and for this, only the Lowlanders can be depended on, for the Highlanders of Scotland are a defeated and dying race, unable, as they have always been, to offer a sustained and effective resistance to English pressure. It is indeed too often forgotten that if the Highlanders were content with the worst land in the British Isles, it was mainly because they lacked the toughness and political sagacity to take or hold better lands.

The analysis of the Highland character is merciless, but no one can say it is fundamentally unfair. The Highlander appears as "the Peacock of the Western World," an incurable primitive, no more capable, in the mass, of adapting himself to the post-Renaissance world than the Red Indian or the Polynesian, a man of inherent and unshakable personal dignity whose whole life is a drama of which he is always the central figure, to whom a dramatic defeat is more valuable than a drab victory. The passive and tragic dignity with which he accepted the evictions, most of them the work not of the racially English, but of fellow Scots, as a characteristic as his perfectly idiotic conduct (in the military sense) at Killiecrankie and Culloden, and his almost entire absence from the battles in which the Lowlanders really preserved Scottish independence.

Mr. MacDonell accepts the theory that Highlanders and Lowlanders are cousins, being essentially Gaelic and Celtic, a theory which seems to pay scant attention to the activities of the Norsemen in the Islands and the North, and the fact that much of the Lowlands was included in an Anglian kingdom for some six centuries. Most people would certainly feel that the Lowland Scot has much closer affinities with the Northern

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Candid Chronicle

BY D'ARCY MARSH

"I'm Telling You," by Hector Charlesworth. Toronto, Macmillan, \$3.

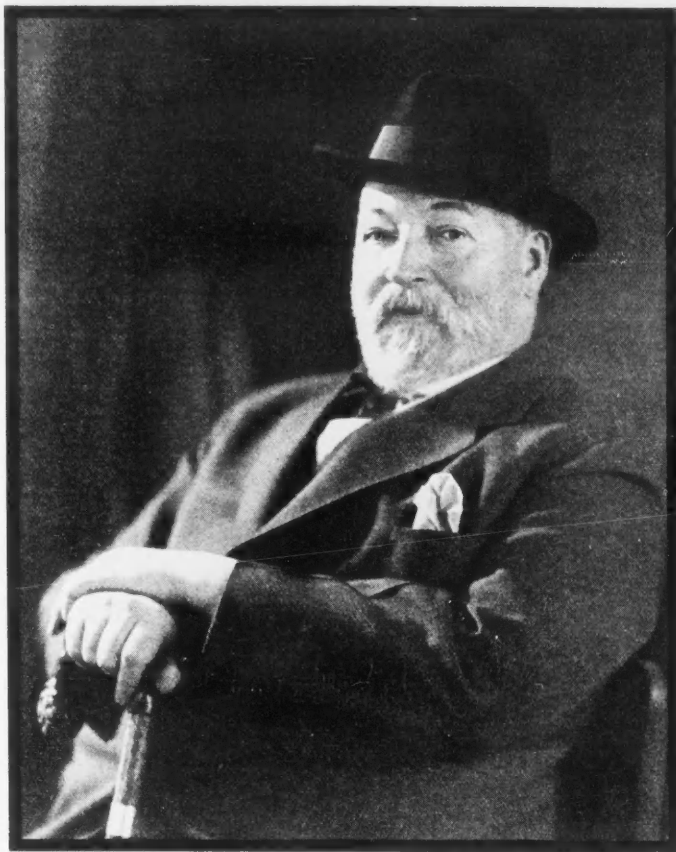
IF HAMLET had been the editor of some equivalent of SATURDAY NIGHT in Elsinore, all might have been well. The Prince of Denmark might have indulged his fancy for speculation and introspection with perfect safety, and died a happy man. Instead, he was thrust into a world of action. There was the trouble about the old King, there was that poor, intruding fool, Polonius; there was Laertes, and there was the business about Ophelia. So Hamlet died pleading with Horatio to absent himself from felicity awhile, "and in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain, to tell my story."

Reading Hector Charlesworth's latest candid chronicles, one gains the impression that editors of such periodicals as SATURDAY NIGHT should not be lured from the impersonal safety of their editorial chairs. Mr. Charlesworth's incursion into public life, whatever results it has had for Canada, has exerted a slightly disruptive influence upon "I'm Telling You," the book under review.

Hector Charlesworth, one of the most known and most respected of Canadian journalists, played a consistent role in this country, up to the major change in his adult life. It was the role of the trusted editor, the candid but kindly critic. True, he had his contacts, indeed his close friendships, with men who were involved in the hurly-burly of affairs, but he was protected by the impersonality of his profession. When the last word had been said, the last threat made, the last plot of the day discussed, he could retire for the night, secure in the thought that his function was primarily that of critic, a function for which he is admirably suited. So he travelled through what some regard as the best years of his life, growing more and more like King Edward VII, and contemplating with increasing serenity the activities of his fellow men.

THEN, in 1922, no doubt because of his extensive knowledge of music, literature and Canadian affairs, Mr. Charlesworth was offered the chairmanship of the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission, and the days of independence were at an end. The days of peril had begun. He emerged from the ensuing four-year period, which evidently closed in some bitterness, a bewildered man, smarting from a sense of injustice. The change of Government in 1925 brought about a change in the machinery by means of which radio was controlled in Canada, and that change wiped out Mr. Charlesworth's contract, which otherwise would have been binding for ten years after it had been signed. In "I'm Telling You," he protests against the fact and manner of his dismissal and presents his side of the case. He publishes his account of conversations held between himself, Mr. L. W. Brockington, present Chairman of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Major W. E. Gladstone Murray, its General Manager, Hon. C. D. Howe, Minister of Transport, and others concerned. He publishes, also, extracts from correspondence between himself and Mr. Brockington. Which side is right is no affair of the reviewer of his book; neither, even if he wished to do so, would the reviewer be competent to judge. The issue depends upon two contradictory versions of conversations for which there were no witnesses who could be established as completely unbiased. Therefore, the issue rests with Mr. Charlesworth, Mr. Brockington, Major Murray and Mr. Howe. Perhaps the official records of Canadian Broadcasting Corporation meetings tell the clearest story and these are open to inspection. However it is a pity that the author introduced this quarrel, if quarrel it may be termed, into his book. The urge to do so was, human, of course; he wanted to

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HECTOR CHARLESWORTH

—Photograph by Violet Keene.

In Pre-War Germany

BY G. DE T. GLAZEBROOK

"This Was Germany: An Observer at the Court of Berlin." Letters of Princess Marie Radziwill to General di Robilant. Edited and translated from the French by Cyril Spencer Fox. Toronto, Musson, \$4.50.

PRINCESS MARIE RADZIWIŁŁA was born a Frenchwoman, the great-niece of Prince Talleyrand, from whom, perhaps, she inherited her interest in politics. The letters printed here are taken from the fourth volume of the original edition, and cover the period from 1918 to 1915, the year of the princess's death. Much has already been published, in official documents, monographs, and memoirs about Germany in this period; but letters written by a private individual at the time throw a valuable light on the meaning of events and the personalities that guided the empire. Princess Radziwill seems to have known everyone who was of importance in politics, and in these letters to an old friend one may catch a vivid impression of the atmosphere of the times. Though belonging to the official circle, the author takes a curiously detached view of what went on around her, partly, perhaps, because she was German only by marriage.

Her main interest is in foreign affairs, and the only references to domestic politics show a highly conservative mind without much knowledge of the trends of the time. Like other writers German as well as foreign she was critical of the management of foreign policy, which she regarded on the whole as dangerous and sometimes blundering. Throughout the period there are constant references to the threat of war, and the crisis of 1914 comes only as the culmination of a whole series of crises. The letters add nothing to our knowledge of the outbreak of that war, but those of 1914 and 1915 express the gradual disillusionment in Germany as the first campaigns failed to bring decisive victory, and as food and other commodities began to be restricted.

It is always somewhat of a puzzle to know who were the men that controlled the foreign policy of Germany in the years before the war. To Princess Radziwill the Emperor was well-meaning and anxious for peace, but nervous, excitable, and unable to control his ministers. Bülow was "capable of every unsound idea and every bad influence. He's the fatal man of the country and his secret friendship with that evil genius Holstein is hastening the ruin of Germany. God knows where Bülow is leading us." Like so many of her contemporaries, Princess Radziwill felt the growing menace of the alliances. The Bismarckian system had broken down, and Germany was finding herself "encircled." Her insight into the real danger was all too clear: "Forced into isolation here we shall be obliged to follow Austria's lead in the Balkans and this is not the best way." After quarrels and reconciliations, and quarrels again, Bülow was finally dropped and replaced by Bethmann Hollweg, but it was a change from one type of evil to another. "The new Chancellor is a man of straw. The Emperor wants to be his own, that's what this appointment of Bethmann means." How little the Emperor was able to govern the country himself the succeeding letters clearly show.

The old Emperor Francis Joseph, and a dozen other of the leading figures of Europe, march through the pages of this astonishing princess who exchanged secret for secret by letter or in the endless series of dinners and receptions of which she never seemed to tire. If it is true that letter-writing is a dying art, there is much that we shall never know of the post-war era.

"Three Centuries of Canadian Story," by J. E. Wetherell. (Musson, \$1.25.) Stories of Canada from John Cabot to John Franklin that are not usually found in school textbooks, stirring events and adventure along the by-paths of history. With many fine illustrations by C. W. Jefferys.

Leacock's Latest

BY GEORGE MCCrackEN

"Here Are My Lectures," by Stephen Leacock. Toronto, Dodd Mead, \$2.25.

SATURDAY NIGHT is just about to celebrate its fiftieth birthday, and it is rather interesting to note that Mr. Leacock's name, probably alone among the names of writers whose books are being reviewed in this issue, appeared in SATURDAY NIGHT during its first year of publication. But it did not then appear in connection with a book review as it has appeared so many times during the intervening years. Here is the item which ran on October 13 in the column, "Varsity Chat," in Vol. 1, No. 46, of this periodical: "Mr. S. L. Leacock '90, will attend Strathroy training school till Christmas." "Strathroy training school" is presumably the noted model school which more than one Canadian used as a stepping-stone from the farm to the teaching profession to fame. Sir Arthur Currie used it, and eventually became president of McGill University. McGill, when Sir Arthur became president of it, was widely known throughout the world because Stephen Leacock, the internationally famous humorist, was on its staff. There really is little doubt that many more people have heard of McGill because of Leacock the humorist than because of Leacock the economist or Rutherford the physicist or Osler the physician.

MR. LEACOCK is no longer on the active staff of McGill. He makes that very clear an almost unnecessary number of times in "Here Are My Lectures" (which are not academic lectures). Shortly after his retirement from academic work a year ago he embarked on a lecture tour of the West. The tour promptly resulted in the serially published "My Discovery of Western Canada," a book which has not the slightest competition for ranking as the worst book Leacock ever wrote. But the tour also resulted in "Here Are My Lectures," which is an extraordinarily good Leacock book, possibly the most important Leacock book since "Sunshine Sketches." While Leacock was discovering the West, and the East which was reading about the discovery was thinking it had discovered that at last the great man was seriously slipping, the West, listening to his lectures, was apparently discovering a revitalized Leacock. Oh, it is perfectly true that "Here Are My Lectures" is blighted on every other page by traces of the worst of the old Leacock—the ancient but sure-fire gag, the *reductio ad absurdum* carried not merely to the magnificent conclusion but beyond it to the silly stage, the childish rather than the clever pun. And it is true that two-thirds of the book is about the same as the best of the old Leacock, which is extremely good indeed, even if it is not good for much more than a contemporary international reputation. But nearly one-third of the volume seems, at least to this reviewer, to be of such stuff as could result in a high and permanent place in English letters if all the cheap, anything-for-a-laugh sections could be eliminated. There are signs of a new vigor that is not mainly concerned with tailoring to fit the current American verbal slapstick market. There is a hint of universality in the book. There is a greater tendency to look for the fun in the subject rather than to concentrate heartlessly on the job of making fun of the subject. The question is: Does "Here Are My Lectures" represent a strange autumnal transition in Leacock's writing career, and will his next book live a thousand years well, at any rate, at least two hundred?

IN ADDITION to humorous lectures, the book contains "a lot of odd stories that I used to drag into them (the lectures) as best I could; or, failing that, tell them to little gatherings of hospitable friends at home" (Continued on page 11)

A Young Man's View

BY LUCY VAN GOGH

"Where Seldom a Gun is Heard," by Sir Anthony Jenkinson. Toronto, Saunders, \$2.75.

IT DOES, of course, help considerably to be a baronet. If the author of this book had been merely "Tony" Jenkinson, an English journalist of twenty-four, running through Canada on a slim expense account from the London *Banner*, it is unlikely that he would have had the experience of being driven at top speed to the Ottawa railway station in Mr. R. B. Bennett's limousine, with Mr. Bennett himself waving a funeral procession out of the way until it "swerved to one side, and as we swept by startled pall-bearers broke their ranks in confusion and grief-stricken relatives huddled in the gutter, terrified lest they be reunited so soon with the loved one they mourned." (The author caught the train, but only after Mr. Bennett, finding the station full of diplomats seeing somebody off, and determined that his guest should not miss it, had buttoned up his morning coat, pushed his bowler hat down on his head, and "charged into the mob. Taken completely by surprise, the bewildered diplomats put up little resistance, and within half a minute Mr. Bennett had mown a lane clean through their midst.")

On the other hand it was probably not his baronetcy, but his amazingly charming personality (which many of us writing people felt and succumbed to) that got him into Mr. Hepburn's room at the King Edward that night. It must have been a year ago or nearly, for Mr. Mackenzie King's colored photograph still stood on a table, when a phone call to his own room assured him that Mr. Hepburn's door would be left open for him, and on his arrival the Prime Minister "led me into the room where the radio was playing, and introduced me to his friends. They were his doctor and a member of his government and two attractive girls who sprawled on a sofa and called the Prime Minister 'chief' and who generally lent a rather unparliamentary air to the place." This unparliamentary air did not however mislead Sir Anthony as to Mr. Hepburn's courage and ability nor the definiteness of his faith in private enterprise and the right of initiative to have its reward. For he has something else besides his hereditary title and his doubtless equally hereditary charm. He has an uncanny power to analyze and

comprehend unfamiliar situations and newly-met characters.

This is not only the most amusing but the wisest book about Canada by an outsider, in English, that has ever come our way. It was preceded by an equally amusing one about the United States; but that country is enormously easier to be amusing about than Canada. Who but Sir Anthony could have put his finger so unerringly on the comic-opera side of the French nationalist movement in Quebec? "Its division into many factions, each essentially the same as the other, yet each with its leader who heaped spectacular abuse upon the leaders of rival factions and who, being anxious to impress the inquirer with his knowledge and significance, would lay all his cards on the table with refreshing naiveté." The sketches of Dr. Hamel and Paul Bouchard in this vein are exquisite. ("Bouchard, as a Rhodes scholar, had been a contemporary of mine at Oxford. Large tortoise-shell glasses did little to remove the bloom of youth from his face. It was hard to believe that I was not interviewing him for the *Isis*.")

There is a delicious report of a meeting of the Aberhart Bible Institute, a history of an evening at the Royal York Hotel which gives that caravanserai more personality than any press-agent has yet managed to pour frequent contributor, Mollie McGee, helped on this), a just and appreciative article on Denton Masey and another on "The Policeman at King and Yonge," and most sympathetic studies of nickel mines at Sudbury and coal mines in Cape Breton. Sir Anthony has the gift of always getting under the skin, and never into the hair, of every kind of human being he meets with. So lightly written as to sound superficial, his book is so seriously and sincerely thought out as to be actually very deep.

"I've Been Around," by Claudia Cranston. (Lippincott, \$3.) The author of "Sky Gypsy" has been around the world and herewith sets down her lively and intelligent impressions of that six-months' tour. She was deeply impressed by the Japanese, found them friendly, civilized, believes that their sun is rising, that they will unite Asia for the Asiatics. Incidentally, in contrast with Europe, she saw no soldiers in Japan. (Perhaps a reviewer's impolite note because they were all in China?)



WINSTON CHURCHILL

From a caricature by Low in "Lions and Lambs".

Portraits by Winston

BY FRANK H. UNDERHILL

"Great Contemporaries," by the Rt. Hon. Winston S. Churchill. Toronto, Nelson, \$4.50.

THESE biographical sketches are not to be weighed against Mr. Churchill's more important volumes upon his great ancestor or upon the world crisis. What we have here is journalism rather than history, but some of it is magnificent journalism. Mr. Churchill is a great rhetorician in the best sense of the term. He can never be dull, and he is capable at his finest of illuminating his subject with penetrating brilliance.

This volume consists of sketches of twenty-one of his contemporaries. In the field of English public affairs he has not included any figures who are still alive among us today. About Europeans he feels freer to deal with living men. But the really great chapters of the book are those which deal with his elders who dominated English politics when he entered public life as a young man and towards whom he looks up with a reverent, but not too reverent, affection. He himself says that the central theme of his book is the group of six great English statesmen: Balfour, Chamberlain, Morley, Rosebery, Asquith and Curzon. These men he came to know intimately; they were kind to him in spite of differing political views and helped him in his own career. Evidently he regards them as men of greater stature than most of the men of his own age. They had certain Victorian virtues which he respects, though he may poke fun at the serene assurance of the Victorians. The unexpected impression which emerges from this book is Mr. Churchill's humility before these Victorians. Somehow it makes him a more attractive man himself.

The other sketches are not in the same class. When he writes about continental Europeans he is merely rhetorical in the bad sense. The Englishman cannot understand the continental. He fights him or he uses him for his own purposes. And Mr. Churchill's remarks about Foch, Clemenceau, Hindenburg, Hitler, and

such men are just familiar common-places strung together. One assumes that this part of the book is pot-boiling. Only about Trotsky is he passionate, and here he hates so bitterly that he overreaches himself in his invective. He writes like an Eton schoolboy. And the reader remembers that Trotsky and his red army once frustrated one of Mr. Churchill's most cherished schemes. This chapter only shows how petty and mean a Churchill can be.

THE six central chapters are full of interesting stories, some of them with new information for the historian, and still more interesting reflections. "How these Victorians busied themselves," says Mr. Churchill, "and contended about minor things! What long, brilliant and impassioned letters they wrote each other about refined personal and political issues of which the modern Juggernaut progression takes no account!" Rosebery flourished in an age of great men and small events. Most surprising of all is the sympathy which the author reveals for the austere intellectual, John Morley. He tells us that Morley's well-known memorandum on his resignation at the outbreak of the war, while it is very vague on dates and sequences of events, is as true and living a presentment of the war crisis in the British cabinet as has ever been given or is ever likely to be given. For Balfour he feels a similar tenderness, though it would be hard to think of two men whose intellectual processes were more different from those of Winston Churchill than Balfour and Morley. He paints a most charming picture of Balfour making a speech and stopping in one of those famous pauses while he searched in his mind for the appropriate word. "At such times the assembly joined him sympathetically in the search. It was as if he had dropped his eyeglasses when reading an important despatch. Everyone, friend and foe, was anxious to recover them for him. All were delighted when he found them him- (Continued on page 7)



From the jacket of "The Very House," by Mazo de la Roche. (Macmillan, \$2.25), reviewed in this issue.

Mail-Order House

BY MORLEY CALLAGHAN

"The Chute," by Albert Halper. Toronto, Macmillan, \$2.75.

THOUGH "The Chute" seems to me to be a better book than Halper's "The Foundry," it doesn't add anything to his stature as a writer because you find yourself wondering if he always wrote so badly, and you pick up "The Foundry" again and take another look at it and find your worst suspicions confirmed. All the remarkable virtues are exhibited here again: the deep sympathy for humble people, a good-natured indulgence for all human weakness, the sense of reality, and your conviction that ninety per cent. of it is honest truth; but the Halper prose style is so undistinguished it reads at times like an abominable translation.

"The Chute" is a story about a big mail order house in Chicago and the lives of the employees, a truly collective novel, for in spite of the publisher's blurb there is no hero or protagonist. It is in this movement of life along the aisles and in the departments that is such a finely observed piece of work. All these clerks, these boys and girls with their lives dominated so completely by their bosses and their pay envelopes become important to you. Their relations with each other and the way these relationships dominate their lives outside the mail order house are seen so truly that the book often becomes deeply moving. There are many things that Halper sees truly. He seems to have a perfect understanding of the relationship between the bosses and these boys and girls. He sees all the little hypocrisies, the pompous, self-conscious strutting, the uneasiness the employees feel when some boss is being democratic. Halper sees it all honestly and makes it laughable. In fact there's nothing much wrong with the way Halper sees things, granting him his view of life he is determined to take—that everything that happens among people is motivated by sex or economics he's dead on most of the time. But when you work so determinedly from that point of view it's inevitable that you give an impression of a limitation of experience.

YET in spite of Halper's extraordinary virtues, his warmth and sympathy, his comic sense, his tenderness and his closeness to people, the book remains that he never sees anything in a clear, sharp outline; he blurs everything, the walter of words flows on, he repeats and repeats and ends up by giving the impression that he is determined to tab his characters with stock identifications so you'll have no trouble recognizing them when they come on the scene.

The terrible impurity of style seems to come from a wavering intention. The intention obviously is to write in a flow of language that is close to the characters that they themselves seem to be explaining themselves. It's a fine idea and it often comes off in first-rate fashion. But then Halper suddenly seems to lose whatever ear for language he once had and the prose falls into the fourth-grade style of a high-school boy chattering his best literary gifts. If anyone has any doubt about this it is a simple matter to read a page or two aloud and see for yourself.

It's hard to say what Halper is looking for. Having done "The Foundry" one would have imagined it would have been hard for him to do "The Chute" and the intention of the book is exactly the same as that of "The Foundry." The only justification was in trying to do it a little better this time. I think he succeeded. But the way he ended both books shows that the workers must remain as very good obedient slaves to the workers, but it isn't writing Halper any further in his novel writing.



PEPITA.

Getting Down to Cases

BY MARIE CHRISTIE

"Pepita," by Victoria Sackville-West. Toronto, Longmans, Green, \$3.50.

FAMILY biographies are always open to criticism. The author who confines himself to retelling dry facts of the public life and career of his subject inevitably produces a stodgy bad-seller, while the one who discusses his victim intimately is bound to risk being charged with doubtful taste. There is no question of the intimate approach of Miss Sackville-West to her mother's and grandmother's life history. She sets out to tell all, or so nearly all as makes no difference, and she very nearly succeeds.

It is a colorful, amazingly romantic story to be intimately connected with so supposedly reactionary a stratum of society as the British Peerage. It is the story of Pepita, the Andalusian dancer, and her illegitimate daughter who became Lady Sackville-West. It tells of gypsies and Spanish villagers, stage folk, a wealthy young diplomat on foreign service, a peerage mixed up with law suits, first over the heir's legitimacy, and later over a huge legacy of money. It is vastly more entertaining than the average novel, and it is every word true. We have the author's oath on it.

The book is divided equally into the story of Pepita who lived irregularly for many years with Lionel Sackville-West, subsequently Lord Sackville and the grandfather of the author, and Pepita's daughter, Pepita Victoria, *Fille de pere inconnu*, who married her cousin Lionel Sackville-West and became Lady Sackville and the mother of the author. The setting of the first half is Spain and the fringes of various European capitals where Pepita first danced and then settled down to a kind of shadowy domesticity and the bearing of many children.

Miss Sackville-West's brilliant pen has never been put to describing a

more remarkable scene. Pepita comes to life and explains herself and a good deal about her descendants. Her relatives, the husband she left but remembered kindly to the end of her days, her utter fecklessness, her charm—all these are conveyed with great skill. She died in 1872, leaving five children to the care of their unmarried father.

Of these children Pepita-Victoria was the second in age and the eldest daughter. How she and her sisters grew up in a French convent, came to England to their father's relatives, and through their influence joined him in Washington where he had been made British minister makes good reading. But the excitement begins when Pepita returns with him to England and marries the future Lord Sackville, becoming a Peeress with one of the most famous houses in England, Knole, as her country seat.

The famous Sackville-West Case in the law courts that stirred England in the first decade of the 20th century is here discussed, and the subsequent one in which the author's mother fought for the retention of a legacy of £150,000 left her by her unusual friend Sir John Murray Scott. If just here the author seems to show a sudden reticence, we may assume it is only because there was nothing more to tell.

The character and personality of her mother fill the rest of the book. That she was an amazing, bizarre, and at times surely quite infuriating person there is little doubt. In a humbler walk of life she might have had a keeper. Like Mary Queen of Scots "In her end was her beginning." There is a poignancy about the end of her days that her daughter does not minimize. One can only feel, and with sympathy for their appreciation of the fact, that it is unlikely the British Peerage will ever see her like again.

Yesterday's Europe

BY HECTOR CHARLESWORTH

"Heyday in a Vanished World," by Stephen Bonsal. Toronto, George J. McLeod, \$4.

WHEN I picked up this volume I had almost forgotten the name of Stephen Bonsal, although forty years ago his fame and achievements bore an almost legendary significance for all ambitious young newspaper men. No newspaper correspondent of his years had led so full a life, been so many places or talked on such familiar terms with the great men of his time. It is good to know that he is alive, in his seventies, still wielding a vigorous pen, and retaining his youthful sense of the picturesque. He has written one of the most interesting books published in many a day; and it is the more potent because he is able to write of European politics half a century ago in the light of subsequent events.

The phrase "A Vanished World" is singularly apt, because the Europe Bonsal knew as a roving correspondent for James Gordon Bennett of the "New York Herald," is as dead as the statesmen and dynasties which governed it. Mr. Bonsal's allusions to dates and to his own backgrounds are vague, but we rather that he was a young Marylander of wealth who had been educated in France and Germany, and like many another in his native state, a horseman. The horses wrecked his fortune when he was 22, and James Gordon Bennett, one of the most amazing of all Americans, took him up and sent him to Europe as a sort of personal and confidential representative, charged with responsibilities that might well have taxed the experience and judgment of men double his age.

Savor is given the book by the continual presence in the background of the mighty Bennett, personal friend of half the crowned heads of Europe including Abdul Hamid, the villainous Sultan of Turkey. Bennett lived most of his life on his yacht, and nobody on the "Herald" staff knew on a given day just where he was, or at what moment he would walk into the office. Nor did any of the staff know when a cable might be received dismissing him. Many years ago I saw a portrait of Bennett, the ablest work of the French painter, Dantan, and a more baleful countenance than his, with its sun-burned skin, steel grey eyes and long features, it would be difficult to imagine. Yet running his newspaper in a manner that would seem sheer madness to a modern publisher, he reaped from the "Herald" an annual net profit averaging one million dollars. When he died in 1918 after a life of unceasing dissipation, he had attained the age of 77. The newspaper he had run according to his own caprices, but with amazing foresight for 46 years, did not long survive in its own identity, his death.

IN THIS volume, which brings us down only to the late nineties, we see Bennett in the heyday of his influence as an international figure, publisher of a newspaper with editions in London and Paris, as well as New York, and with his finger in every European pie. Though anonymity was the rule of his newspaper, he was proud, off and on, of his correspondents foremost of whom had been Henry M. Stanley, whom he sent to find Livingstone. From Mr. Bonsal's pages we learn how near to sitting on a volcano a job on the "Herald" was. In his own case after being lifted to a pinnacle of eminence unparalleled in the case of a writer so young, Bennett by sudden caprice, decided to break him, and reduced him to the humblest place in the editorial rooms of the New York office. His emergence to favor brings this first volume to a close.

If in the nineties Bonsal found himself wretchedly poor and covering the meanest assignments, he had while basking in the favor of "Tiger Jim" as Bennett was known in the

(Continued on page 7)

Highlights of a Brilliant Winter List

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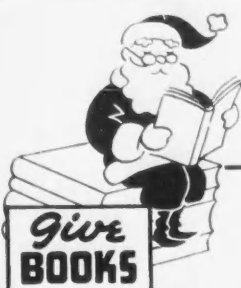
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AT ALL BOOKSELLERS

MUSSON

The Fiction Shelf

FUN ASHORE

"The Sailor's Holiday," by Eric Linklater. Toronto, Nelson. \$2.00.

BY W. S. MILNE

LINKLATER has done it again. This is a joyous yarn, fit to put alongside "Poet's Pub," and easily the best thing Linklater has done since "Juan in America." Henry Tippus is an able seaman, with a marked talent for imaginative improvisation, who spends a few crowded weeks ashore, during which he contrives to have a number of surprising adventures, occupy and lose several jobs, fall in love, cage a number of drinks, assist at a block and tackle elopement with an interesting sequel, and tell an amazing number of improbable thrilling stories, with much corroborative detail and appropriate philosophic comment. Altogether a delightful character, closely related spiritually to the immortal Mr. Holly who collected cigarette cards, and invented Oxford and Cambridge cocktails. After reading "Juan in China," one began to fear that Mr. Linklater—to Scotland may he long be spared!—was becoming preoccupied with the Graver Issues. It is with whole-hearted pleasure that we report the rumor a malicious canard.

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

"The Trojan Horse," by Christopher Morley. Toronto, Lippincott. \$2.50.

BY L. A. MACKAY

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY'S first novel in five years is a thoroughly individual interpretation of the famous story of Troilus and Cressida. The tale is brought up to date with a perfectly Chaucerian or Shakespearean liberty; antiquity and modern times are inextricably interwoven. The warriors are a bit like a football team, a bit like a bunch of gangsters, a very illuminating and accurate way of depicting the Homeric heroes. The radio and the hourglass sit side by side; Pandarus in semi-formal Down Town dress moves easily among tunics and chitons, and the whole thing is not at all bewildering but perfectly natural, comprehensible, and appropriate. This is not one of those arch productions recently popular in which an immense parade of archaeology combines rather frigidly with an immense parade of modern psychology. Mr. Morley has brought the characters to life after the manner of the masters, by presenting them at once in their own time, and in ours. The result is a brilliant success, a thoroughly moving, and thoroughly amusing book, hard-boiled as the best of them when he likes, tender as he chooses at other times, shifting with complete ease from ribaldry to poetry and back again in half a dozen lines.

Beneath it all, gradually coming more and more into prominence, is an allegory of modern civilization, the ominous entrance of the Trojan Horse of our scientific and mechanistic civilization into the complacency of everyday life. Yet Mr. Morley is no partisan. He is not enunciating any dogma, but disengaging, as an artist, the eternal verities of human nature in a vividly presented and swiftly told story.

ART BUSINESS

"Rumbin' Galleries," by Booth Tarkington. Toronto, Doubleday Doran. \$2.50.

BY PAUL CHRISTIE

IT IS questionable whether a writer cannot go too far in seeking new subjects for his tales, and whether so limited a setting as that of "Rumbin' Galleries" does not fail in its effect when carried beyond the equally limited field of the short story into the larger work. The life of an art dealer is probably at least as interesting and varied as the life of that stand-by of modern novelists, the poverty-stricken farmer; but a novel dealing with the trade in objects



ELMER RICE

Author of "Imperial City".

d'art will inevitably be hampered by some of the restrictions of the auctioneer's catalogue and its work of pure criticism.

As far as it can be overcome, however Mr. Tarkington has managed by his impeccable technique and subtle yet well-defined characterization, to overcome this initial disadvantage. He is an eminently easy-going writer; his is no literary style to be analysed with careful rapture; he succeeds by his warm human sympathy. Throughout this new work, he never forgets that his job is to tell a story; the story of the precarious fortunes of an art dealer and his two assistants, whose romance is the theme which connects the various incidents of Mr. Rumbin's rise to greater prominence in his trade.

You may lay down "Rumbin' Galleries," as I did, feeling that you know a good deal about art criticism; or you may not. It doesn't matter very much; though Mr. Tarkington obviously knows his pictures, he also knows not to be didactic. You will feel, however, cheerier for knowing Mr. Rumbin.

IT'S A SMALL WORLD

"Imperial City," by Elmer Rice. Toronto, Longmans, Green. \$3.00.

BY W. S. MILNE

ELMER RICE wrote "The Adding Machine," "On Trial," "Street Scene," "Counsellor at Law," and "Judgment Day," and won a Pulitzer Prize for drama. Now he has written a novel, and a reasonably good novel, although not as distinguished in its genre as the plays were in theirs. His theme is the microcosm that is New York, and he contrives, in tracing the doings of the three brothers, sister and mother of the fabulously wealthy Coleman family, to give glimpses, vistas, panoramas and keyhole peeps of almost every imaginable side of New York life: department store, high finance, the theatre, law courts, labor forums, churches, vice, universities, art, society, communism, ticket scalping, traveling salesmen, Judaism, the Negro problem, dipsomaniacs, movie stars, night clubs and a murder trial. There are hundreds of characters, and it is either a merit of the book or a defect that he never uses a character once only. Mr. A's valet is Mrs. B's partner in a vice racket, which involves the daughter of Mr. C, who is a partner of A. A's brother is a professor who teaches the son of another partner of A and was engaged to D, who now goes with A's other brother, who flies the Atlantic with E, who insulted F, who is an habitué of Mrs. B's, and is finally shot by another brother of A's; and so on, right down the alphabet. This rigid economy of character, a result of Mr. Rice's stage writing, gives the book a somewhat artificial structural unity.

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MCLEOD BOOKS

FOUR NOVELS

BY LADY WILLISON

"Pinkney's Garden," by Neil Bell. Toronto, Collins. \$2.00.

"The Strawberry Field," by Alison Fleming. Toronto, Musson. \$2.00.

"Who Would Have Daughters?" by Marguerite Steen. Toronto, Collins. \$2.00.

"The Silver String," by Cora Jarrett. Toronto, Oxford. \$2.50.

MR. BELL'S work is already favorably known; "Strange Melody" and "Crocus" proved his right to be regarded as a considerable novelist. His most recent novel, "Pinkney's Garden" is wholesome, sincere and interesting as it deals with life in the late seventies of last century. The novelist's characters live in a Suffolk town. The power of the sea over the land and over the people who live by the sea forms perhaps the strongest feature in Mr. Bell's novel. Mary Paston, a nursemaid, "a short, pretty, brown-haired girl of twenty" is the heroine. Brought to Storwick by her employers, she attracts the love of Tom Pinkney who owns and cultivates a market garden, scooped out of the

cliff and running down to the foreshore. Mary and Tom are married; they have four children. The sea encroaches upon the garden. Battling with the sea, Tom dies and Mary is left to fend for the children and reclaim the garden. Mary's strength and sweetness are shown very lovably. This is a happy, worthwhile story, not sophisticated, yet not old-fashioned, and thoroughly sound in its knowledge of human nature.

MISS FLEMING is evidently a Scottish author who writes with freshness and with some quality which reminds the reader of architecture. Her colors are not bright, but they are handled sincerely. "The Strawberry Field" is rather a dour novel. Mrs. Testard, mother of a number of girls, Kitty, Barbara a nurse, Betsy, Sophy, Louise, Laura, Olive, is as hateful a domestic tyrant as one has ever met. She obliterates her husband who consoles himself by reading Scott's novels. She hates her children and the bitterness of her remarks to these unfortunate is difficult to imagine. She tells the youngest, Olive, that one of the neighbors is her father, not Mr. Testard, and is more interested in her own good looks and fine clothes than in any human being, except perhaps the neighbor Allardice. Her only 'comepanee' is that she arrives at Allardice's deathbed and is not welcome; he has forgotten her. After her mother's death, Olive slowly goes mad. Sophy dies alone. Only Laura is happy in her convent. The title is taken from Tolstoy's "War and Peace."

THE clever Miss Steen if anything enhances her reputation as a novelist in this dissection of an English family, consisting of Daddy or Daddikins, Mother, Flora, Ellen and Mavis. Daddy idealizes himself, talks all the time and would wear out most daughters. Mother is a matchmaker. Flora gets herself into trouble, but marries, and as Ellen says, "Is everything to be the same?" Ellen is possessive; as long as she can fasten the tentacles of her affection on some one individual nothing else matters. Mavis sees now and then a glimmer of hope that she may escape; but in the end Ellen has her arms round her little sister and is piously giving thanks that "they only have each other."

THE present reviewer is an admirer of Mrs. Jarrett's work. Few novels have the same power to seize upon the imagination of a reader as this novelist's "Night Over Fitch's Pond" and "Strange Houses." She is a keenly intelligent writer and mistress of suspense and development. "The Silver String" is much above the average in interest, but does not equal the novels named. It was rather a relief therefore to find from the publisher's note that "The Silver String" is an earlier work re-cast and amplified. Most novelists hate to let early work go, but to practice self-denial is generally safer. Divorce, remarriage and alienation of one's husband's affections form the chief theme of "The Silver String" which is well handled.

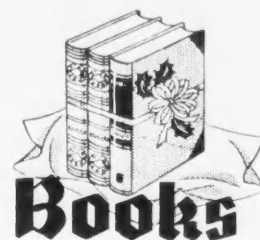
PORTRAITS BY WINSTON

(Continued from page 3)

self in his top right-hand waistcoat pocket."

About Asquith he maintains a thesis which one hopes he will develop at greater length sometime again. He says that the usual conception of Asquith's passivity is quite wrong, and he is severe upon the official Spender biography for painting Asquith's picture in so subdued a tone and stinted a color that it does not revive the personality of the "stern, ambitious, intellectually proud man fighting his way with all necessary ruthlessness through some of the most rugged and terrible years our history has known." Mr. Spender, he charges, presents the Asquith of December, 1916, as "a kind of Saint Sebastian standing unresisting with a beatific smile, pierced by the arrows of his persecutors," whereas actually "he defended his authority by every resource in his powerful arsenal."

The book is full of lighter touches. "Asquith's lucidity of style," said Balfour, "is a positive disadvantage when he has nothing to say." Mr. Churchill once asked Balfour whether he ever prepared his perorations. "No, I say what occurs to me and sit down at the end of the first grammatical sentence." And this about



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YESTERDAY'S EUROPE

(Continued from page 4)

office, and "The Commodore" as he was known in Europe, he had in his brief career seen as much as any young man in the world; had known Gladstone and Parnell, the Prince of Wales, Bismarck, Von Moltke, General Boulanger, Abdul Hamid, not to mention the wild politicians of the Balkans, among whom he lived for two years. One of his most amusing chapters tells of the months he and the late Arthur Brisbane spent in the European entourage of the prizefighter, John L. Sullivan—at that time the "uncrowned king" of the United States. It is obvious that

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Bonsal's own social backgrounds were useful, for through American diplomats who had known his family he had the entrée in every continental capital. In the period of his humiliation the young newspaper man whom he loved the best was Richard Harding Davis. The only defect of "Heyday in a Vanished World" is that it perhaps deals at too great length with the Balkans of 50 years ago, but Mr. Bonsal's excuse is that in the "cockpit of Europe" were brewed our future woes.

The Story of the Oxford
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ARCTIC JOURNEYS

by Edward Shackleton

With a preface by
The Rt. Hon. the
Lord Tweedsmuir

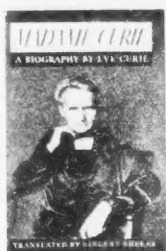
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Among the New Books

EAST AND WEST

"Life's Waking Part," by James Frazer Smith, Toronto, Nelson.

\$2.50.

BY HECTOR CHARLESWORTH

THE author of this book is a clergyman and former medical missionary now resident in Edmonton. Though in his eightieth year, he has written a book remarkable in vitality and variety of interest. Few Canadians have seen so much of the world as he. Born in a pioneer clearing in Grey county, Ontario, in 1858, it was his destiny to serve in China and India, and to spend his latter years in an outpost city of the Canadian West. Thus Dr. Frazer Smith has been a continual eye-witness of changes in human society, as contrasted as the emergence of civilization in the Upper Canada wilderness, the growth of nationalism in India and the substitution of a republic for dynastic rule in China. That he is a spiritually minded man does not lessen the interest of his observations of the human scene, whatever his abiding place.

The book really begins in Scotland, for the author springs of a Highland crofter family which one hundred years ago was evicted from lands on which they had been tenants of generations, because the landlord saw more profit in turning farms into sheep pasture. The same cruel story of rapacious landlordism lies back of the original settlement of many centres in Upper Canada. The martyrdom that Scottish and Irish emigrants endured, bred in them qualities which made them the best settlers that ever entered a wilderness. The account of the founding of the community first known as "Smith Settlement," then as "Lafontaine," then as "Griffins Corners," and finally as Dornoch is a fascinating tale of pioneer beginnings and progress. It lies 20 miles from Owen Sound, and the original settlers had to trek many miles through the bush with their belongings and cattle, for there were then no roads north of Guelph. Dr. Smith makes us see the Upper Canada of the pre-Confederation era springing into being.

Obedient what he conceived to be a "call" young Smith studied both divinity and medicine at Queen's University during the earlier régime of Principal G. M. Grant and then went to China with the celebrated Canadian missionary, Rev. Jonathan Goforth. Thus he knows both the old China and the new. In the light of recent events his chapters on Chinese political history in this century are profoundly interesting, particularly that entitled "War Lords and Bandits." Impartially written, by a man who loves the better qualities of the Chinese people, and deplores bloodshed, he tells enough to make it clear that it would be unwise to regard China as all white and Japan as all black. The anarchical condition of China for a quarter of a century he attributes to Russian intrigue. Russia hoped to control China and avenge herself on Japan and the only obstacle to that objective has been Japanese resistance to those aims. Poor China has been the cockpit of this death battle because of interlocking conflicts among her own captives. For China is not a nation, nor a republic nor an Empire as we understand those terms, and in no position to offer a united resistance.

THE WEST INDIES

"Crossroads of the Buccaneers," by Hendrik de Leeuw, Toronto, Lippincott.

\$3.50.

BY EDWARD DIX

MYNHEER DE LEEUW is so obviously the man from Cook's that I expected at any page to see a steamship ticket fall out with Mr. Lippincott's compliments. That none did was regrettable even if Christmas wasn't so near; for traveling with de Leeuw in the West Indies is about as gay as a turn in a library of encyclopedias.

From Saba in the north to Trinidad, de Leeuw gives us the intimate history of each island in between—and there are many—with just enough description to assure us that he was actually there. We do not mean that the history of a West Indian island can be dull but it is readily learned in any public library. There are so many other things that could be told about the West Indies that de Leeuw must appear tedious to the average reader if it were not that there is a good deal of purpose in his method.

The point is that the West Indies, which have always been artless when it comes to tourists—it started with the Caribs trusting Columbus—have gone historical. There was a time when everything was local color and playing the picturesque—when negro boys shined up coconut trees and black girls went about with heavy baskets on their heads swaying their hips—for the tourists' benefit. All very theatrically and for a few shillings. This period seems to have spent itself. Today the West Indies remembers its past and is cleaning up its old monuments. And Mynheer de Leeuw gives a hand.

If you are going to the islands this winter you will find out "Crossroads of the Buccaneers" is recommended to you. With it you can beat off any number of black urchins who want to show you their island's show tomb, parish registry or pet ruin. There is nothing so effective as beating a West Indian negro guide at his own game. If you know your de Leeuw reasonably well you can get a lot of fun out of the trip.

If I were going to the West Indies I doubt whether I'd care for West Indian history. I think the sun and the sea and the swizzles would be what I'd want. Knowing all there is to know about the islands' past might spoil the holiday. Knowing only a little sometimes spoils my faith in humanity.

TWO-CYLINDER ODYSSEY

"One Man Caravan," by Robert Edison Fulton, Jr. Toronto, McLeod.

\$3.50.

BY G. W. HICKS

ROBERT EDISON FULTON, JR., a young man with a penchant for travel, a gift motorcycle and a sense of humor has fully employed all three in writing his travel book, "One Man Caravan." He proves himself to have a keen eye for news and a fine sense of the artistic; the pictures with which he illustrates his book, and which he took himself, have a high news value and display a flair for the unusual; his sketches are simple, graphic, and depict character, construction and terrain as no amount of writing could. Each chapter has a map at the beginning which carefully traces the previous chapter's route and carries it on to the end of the ensuing chapter. We are of the firm opinion that no travel book can fulfil its function properly without some similar guide. Readers who have come to regard this type of book as a camouflage for a world political commentary, will be pleased at the complete lack of such material in Fulton's work. It is written by a young man who wanted to see the world and experience the unusual. He succeeds in doing both, and his account is vivid, salty, and extremely well handled.

In his journey, which starts in England, Fulton flits across France, the Balkans, and into Turkey, goes from Damascus to Baghdad across the Syrian desert. The author's five chapters on Kashmir, the North West Frontier Province and Afghanistan are the best we have read on these territories. Sumatra, Java, Malaya, Siam and China are included in his itinerary, subjected to his photographic eye. Then Japan and home to the United States. The author states that he may not be the first to have encircled the world on a motorcycle, that others may have done it before him. We claim that he is the first to have done so, written a book about it, and refrained from one political assertion or prediction.



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By Christopher Morley

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TRAVELLERS' JOY

"This Is Ontario," by Katherine Hale. Toronto, Ryerson, 241 pages, with 12 illustrations from photographs by "Jay." \$2.50.

BY LADY WILLISON

MRS. GARVIN, Katherine Hale, has written an ideal guide book for Ontario. As far as one knows, it is the first work of its kind which deals with the most populous of the English-speaking Provinces. The necessary background of fact, history, geography, even statistics, is present. In addition, the author has cast over her volume an atmosphere of enjoyment and beauty through which one sees Ontario at its best. The picture thus skillfully presented is both true and lovable.

Mrs. Garvin is a poet whose more recent volumes of poetry, "Morning in the West" and "The Island" are not to be forgotten. She is as well a writer of descriptive prose which has received much praise. "Canadian Cities of Romance," "Canadian Homes of Romance" and "Legends of the St. Lawrence" are beautiful in themselves; they have been also a preparation for producing such a hand book as "This Is Ontario." A poet is at great advantage in writing descriptive prose, and her readers will find themselves enjoying an easy flowing style, passages of lyrical beauty, numberless incidents and stories told with unflinching humor. To all this, Katherine Hale has added a quality, light, gleaming and iridescent, which carries her audience with her pleasantly, even with excitement. Some parts of the narrative, it scarcely needs to be said, are more interesting than others, but the general level of the book is astonishingly even.

"This Is Ontario" has been divided into twelve chapters. Lake Erie Road, The Border Cities, St. Thomas, Long Point and Port Colborne; Grand River Valley, Brantford, Paris, Galt, Elora, Presburg, Dundalk; Blue Water Highway, Simla, Goderich, Guelph, Stratford, Owen Sound and the Bruce Peninsula; On Manitoulin Island; The North Shore; Our Natural Resources which included North Bay, Callander and the Quins; Ottawa River Valley; along the St. Lawrence; North Shore of Lake Ontario; Yonge Street Road; Niagara Road; and Driving South, Woodstock, London and Chatham to Windsor where this attractive journey began.

This travel book is not only a delightful guide to those who would see the Province from motors; everyone as well who knows Ontario will read it with unflagging interest. A reviewer is tempted to quote at large, but has to be content with a list of favorite passages: p. 156, second-hand shops; p. 166, Bath; p. 169, The Lake of the Mountains; p. 190, a remarkable description of Georgian Bay; p. 218, St. Andrew's Church in Niagara-on-the-Lake; and the ending on p. 241. The writer is able to interpret the spirit of locality with striking success; pp. 182-2 contain one of the most notable descriptions of the physical aspect and character of Toronto which has ever been put into print.

The reviewer must add warm congratulations to the author: "This Is Ontario" makes delightful reading; one feels certain in addition that it will be accepted as a permanent in interpretation of Ontario life to-day.

ULYSSES UNPERTURBED

"Free Lance," by E. Alexander Powell. Toronto, McLeod. Price \$4.00.

BY NATHANIEL A. BENSON

IF WE ARE to believe the author of "Free Lance," and we may justifiably do so, since all of his astounding adventures suffer from the virtue (?) of flat understatement he has lived a life which would make Ulysses' own seem like that of a staid stay-at-home. And yet in spite of its ramifications, its amazing thrills, its rousing encounters and experiences in the far and almost forgotten places of this earth, he tells a singularly un-moving story. Perhaps because we have just read Peter Fleming's scintillating chronicle of quiet adventure "One's Company," a saga of quite ordinary episodes filtered through the shining crystal of a dazzling wit, we are unmoved by the marathon pro-



KATHERINE HALE

—Photo by Stephen Jones.

portions of Mr. Powell's story of twenty years of startling adventure.

Unless we have seen them, a man's doings are no more colorful than he can make them in the telling. And that Mr. Powell cannot do. More astonishing things have likely happened to him than could have overtaken ten Ulysseses. But the great difference between Homer's immortal roamer and Mr. Powell is that the hero of the Odyssey always seemed able to protect himself, his personality and his own active interest into the events, lovely and horrible, of which he was a part. Mr. Powell cannot do this. He remains, throughout the most glowing series of adventures, witnessed over all of this troubled and diverse earth, singularly unperturbed and objective in his recordings. His writings of fearful and beautiful things remain as coolly impersonal as those of a CP or an AP dispatch and we suspect that they may, therefore, have been first set down for the chill eagle eye of a syndicate editor.

Honestly, we wish that we could say otherwise, but Mr. Powell's "Free Lance" will endure in our memory as "The travel book to end all travel books." Why? Because the eyes witness herein mentioned remains always an impersonal recorder. He goes through adventures that would put an Oppenheim hero or a Dick Halliburton to shame. But many a man has moved us more with a sprightly story of what happened on a bus-ride between Toronto and Buffalo.

Mr. Powell has gone nearly everywhere and has seen at least everything. He makes the old stay-at-home feel like a worm in his cataloguing of a series of unparalleled wanderings. But in final and cumulative effectiveness, he does not succeed, because he lacks power and style, especially the power of projecting himself into his adventures. He puts the bizarre and the terrifying in the regrettable terms of the veriest commonplace, which for us spells disaster in a book of travel. If all that has happened to Mr. Powell had happened to us, we think that even on Bali, depressed as it is, we could have rallied a few gusts of interest from the 29% who live by artifice, and who dream of the gusto which they could get out of a dashing life like Mr. Powell's certainly seems to have been. Still in spite of all that happened to him, Mr. Powell remains in his interminable details, strangely unmoved. So does the reader.

NOBLEST ROMAN

(Continued from page 4)

we must know the instrument to appreciate the technique. That a man immersed for years in the most active pursuits of editing, publishing and politics should have found time to acquire the mass of erudition which this book displays on the subtlest points of thought of the Augustan Age in every part of the Mediterranean is simply astounding. "Two Canadian winters have enabled me to complete a task begun many years ago." Among the conclusions reached is the thought that "Self-government had been possible in the small city state" Athens or early

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AT ALL BOOKSELLERS

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An illustration from "Pepe and the Parrot".

Books For Children

(Continued from Page 1)

Diggory are as dominating in the imagination as they are immortal. It makes us look upon the books out this year through their eyes.

ALL normal human beings like to look at themselves in mirrors. They also enjoy discussing themselves. This is at the very root of the zest for reading in the race. For human stories are psychic mirrors and when we read about others we read ourselves into the stories and in a very personal definite sense see ourselves. This is particularly true of children. They love to read about other children, because even more absolutely than adults, they can identify themselves with the racial unit. There is nothing I should like to see quite so much as the enjoyment of Gillian and Diggory when they hear their own story. Children are unselfconsciously interested in themselves. It is healthy and it should be kept. It would not hurt any mother or father, or stray aunt or uncle, who happens to have a yen to write, to perfect their technique through writing down the doings and sayings of the children around them. Read about Gillian and Diggory first. Then read it to the children.

Gillian and Diggory would like these books, full of pictures:

"The Stage-Struck Seal," by James Hull. (Oxford University Press, \$1.50).

"Ezekiel," by Elvira Garner. (Oxford University Press, \$1.50).

"Little Dots," an annual of verse, story and pictures. (Upper Canada Tract Society, 39c).

"Pepe and the Parrot," by Ellis Credle. (Nelson, \$2).

"This is the Book of the House That Jack Built," by Robert Burns. (Don't be alarmed if it is not spirit communication, but just another Robbie Burns.) (Oxford University Press, \$2.25).

"Do Not Disturb," by Elizabeth Loring. (Oxford University Press, \$1).

"The Knot Squirrel Tied," by Allison Uttley. (Collins, 85c).

"The Barbar Books," by Jean de Brunhoff, translated from the French by Merle Haas. Four volumes. (Macmillan, each \$1.10).

"The Little Boy and His House," by Stephen Bone and Mary Adshad. (Winston, \$2.25).

"The Knitting Grasshopper," by Miriam Teichner. (Oxford University Press, \$1.50).

"Saucy Agam," by Helen Shackleton. (Macmillan, \$2).

"Lucy Brown and Mr. Grimes," by Edward Ardizzone. (Oxford University Press, \$2).

GILLIAN and Diggory, like all the modern children, are quick on the mental up-take, and it will not be very long before they will want books slightly more grown-up. Their mother and their aunt are not afraid of giving them books a bit beyond

them. That is the way children reach out to growth.

"The School Girl's Annual," \$1.25. "The School Boy's Annual," \$1.25. "The Girl's Own Annual," \$3. "The Boy's Own Annual," \$3. (All from The Upper Canada Tract Society.)

"Washer and Co.," by Harper Cory. (Nelson, 75c). Animal information presented attractively.

"Mourzonk," by Vitaly Bianchi. (Nelson, \$1.50). All about a lynx, translated from the Russian.

"Dwellers of The Marsh Realm," by Archie McKishnie. (McLean, \$1.50). By a Canadian writer and illustrated by a Canadian artist, Franz Johnston.

"My Limerick Book," by Langford Reed. (Nelson, 75c). The answer to the familiar haunting remark, what shall we do tonight? Only take care, it may develop some more Canadian poets.

"The Schoolboy King," by Mark Dallow. (Nelson, \$1).

"Long Ago in Ronen," by Ida M. Withers. (Oxford University Press, \$1.25).

"All Things New," by Sonia Daugherty. (Nelson, \$2). About a young girl escaped out of Revolutionary Russia.

"Wings Over Asia," by Lowell Thomas and Rex Barton. (Winston, \$1.50). The Far East seen from an airplane and described for children.

"This is Petra," by Alice Blackburn Dungan. (Lippincott, \$2.25).

"A Childhood," by Francesca Albinson. (Longmans Green, \$2.50).

"Susannah of the Yukon," by Muriel Denison. (McClelland and Stewart, \$2). It is the national duty of every mother of a small girl to get this book. Mrs. Denison is a Canadian. Her first book about Susannah was chosen for a film for Shirley Temple. Queen Elizabeth has chosen this second one for Princess Elizabeth this Christmas.

"China Quest," by Elizabeth Forman Lewis. (Winston, \$2). No alert child misses China and things Chinese these days. Make him or her respect your alertness by giving him something which flatters his or her brain.

"Silver Chief to the Rescue," by Jack O'Brien. (Winston, \$2). Mounties and the brave dogs of the North belong to the heritage of every young Canadian.

"Boy's Life of Will Rogers," by Harold Keith. (Oxford University Press, \$2). Will Rogers rests in the international tradition. A very human hero.

"Joe and Pinto," by Frances Lloyd Owen. (Oxford University Press, \$1.50). The author is Canadian; the story is about Indians.

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chance and to have left the serenity of his volume undisturbed.

Apart from this, those chapters dealing with the development of nationalized radio in Canada are of profound interest to those concerned with the public affairs of this country. They, much more than his complaints regarding his successors, justify Mr. Charlesworth's appointment to the position he occupied during

CANDID CHRONICLE

(Continued from page 2)

get something off his chest, and he did so, but it would have been better (from an artistic point of view) to have done so in the form of a bro-

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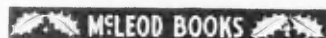


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A Book Of The Month Club Recommendation



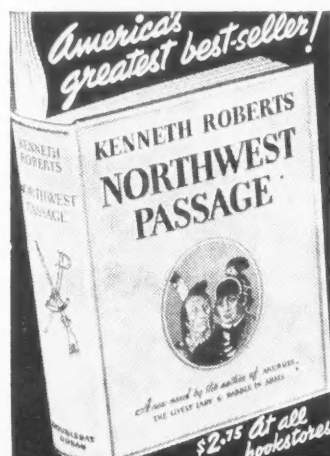
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AT ALL BOOKSELLERS

MUSSON



four harassing years. For, when all has been considered, one must return to the realization that Hector Charlesworth was the pioneer of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, even though he worked through an other instrument. As Mr. Brockington said, in a broadcast tribute to him and his colleagues: "They drove their furrows in an unbroken field... Their work remains as a Canadian achievement and an encouragement to those who inherit the fruits of their labor."

ONE of the curious facts relative to the Great War is that the German soldier who was in the trenches has more in common with the British soldier who was in the trenches than either has with the non-combatant citizens of his own country. So, in reality, have Mr. Charlesworth and his successors much in common. He faced, and they face, political problems; he faced, and they face, the antagonism of certain private interests. He faced, and they face, the complexities of the Canadian political scene.

The reviewer has necessarily concentrated upon that part of "I'm Telling You" which deals with Mr. Charlesworth's activities as Chairman of the Radio Commission, for the events of his administration, and the details of his retirement, have been so recently before the public. Yet he cannot escape the feeling that Mr. Charlesworth is not at his best, as a journalist, when chronicling events in which he played an active part. Few men are. And it is therefore with a sense of relief that the reader arrives at the end of Chapter VIII. From this point on, Hector Charlesworth climbs back into that editorial chair which Mr. Bennett induced him to leave.

We see the old Hector Charlesworth. He watches the pageant of the Imperial Conference; he speculates upon the character of Hon. H. H. Stevens and the phenomenon of his Reconstruction Party; he reminisces of Quebec, the Maritimes, of Colonels, of colorful characters he has known, of the cause célèbre, Deeks versus Wells. Having said what he wanted to say about radio, Mr. Charlesworth, journalistically speaking, pulls the fat out of the fire and gives us an entertaining book. By this I do not mean that his account of the struggle to establish radio is not interesting. It is absorbing, but it is not Charlesworth, and people will buy this book, not to find out who did what, and when, but to be entertained by one of the best raconteurs in Canadian letters.

The later chapters reflect a more serene spirit, and perhaps they will make the reader feel glad that, the strange interlude being over, Mr. Charlesworth is with us once again.

LEACOCK'S LATEST

(Continued from page 2)

lecture, or tell them to the Pullman porter, man's last friend." There are also several short essays. A number of the subjects are as topical as tomorrow's newspaper: the Home Improvement Plan, sit-down strikes, the next war.

"A year ago," he says in the preface, "I retired from college lecturing at the urgent request of the college trustees, who were very firm about it. Now, at the request of innumerable friends all over the country, I am retiring from lecturing on the public platform as a humorist." We felt rather sad last year about the announcement of his retirement from college lecturing; that was serious. We do not feel at all sad about the announcement of his retirement as a platform humorist, even if he is in earnest about it, for the publication of this book is almost certain to create such a demand for new lectures that he will be forced out of retirement.

BOOK NOTES

"Last Flight," by Amelia Earhart (McLeod, \$2.75) is the author's own story of her last flight around the world which ended so tragically in the Pacific Ocean. The text has been arranged by her husband, George Palmer Putnam, and is based on her diaries, dispatches and letters. It will be reviewed in an early issue of SATURDAY NIGHT.



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 "Eastland Echoes," by R. V. Bannan, Toronto, Macmillan, \$1.50.
 "The Best Poems of 1937," selected by Thomas Moulton, Toronto, Nelson, \$1.75.
 "The Book of Songs," translated from the Chinese by Arthur Waley, Toronto, Nelson, \$3.25.

I WONDER what would happen to the poets if they stopped reading each other's works for a while? I dare say there are many cases in which it would do no good at all—they would simply go on writing what they already remembered. But there are others on whom a holiday from their fellow-poets might have a healthy effect. It would force them back on their own resources. It would give them a chance to find out what they had to say for themselves from inner necessity rather than from mere emulation. It might even help them to distinguish what they were inventing from what they were recollecting. And if they really had the stuff of poetry in them, it might help to work out their own individual expression of it independent of the influence of the masters.

Here for instance is Helene Margaret. She has a first rate idea for a narrative poem. The struggles of the Mormon migration westward from Illinois to Utah is one of the great themes of the American pioneer movement which American literature has unduly neglected. But in spite of the author's genuine gift for narrative verse, she has fallen short of the true possibilities of her theme; and I believe that one reason is the way the shadow of "John Brown's Body" falls across her effort. Not that this is necessarily a conscious imitation; but the influence is there, and Miss Margaret seems unable either to escape from the urge to achieve the same heroic sweep or to rise to the height which such an effort demands. As a result, she has written a poem which contains some fine description and some striking lines, but which somehow never achieves the impact which a clear-cut coherence would give it. Even the symbolism suggested by her title doesn't come off. The personification of western America as a great wild horse is a sound idea. But the heroine of this story, who talks so much about her search for this creature, is in fact absorbed by her effort to break away from the Mormons and not go west at all. There is a hiatus between the symbol and the actual theme which is characteristic of the whole poem. Miss Margaret can write, but she would write better if she confined herself to less grandiose attempts.

Nat Benson, too, has never quite shaken himself free from the influence of the masters. In this collection of lyrics, some of which represent his very best work, there is still too much that is reminiscent of the sentimental romanticism of the eighteenth century. Left to himself he could certainly do better than that. And time after time, even in poems which are on the whole of minor quality, he comes through with a line which strikes a major note. It is writing which still has definite promise; one can only hope that its author will yet find the way to fulfillment.

MR. BANNON has given his slender collection of verses the title of "Eastland Echoes." The title is, I feel, a little too apt. There is that total impersonal quality which suggests the disembodied voice; and the subjects and their treatment seem largely devoid of personal emotion, except in such rare instances as the author's disparagement of springtime in Nova Scotia. The rhymes are graceful enough, but there is no warmth behind them, and at best the verses are inoffensive and more than a trifle unreal.

Mr. Moulton once more presents us with his annual collection of the best magazine verse of the year.

It is a collection which shows how much respectable verse is being written. It also leaves one with the slightly disappointed feeling that it ought to be better. It contains many established names, from Auden and Spender to Davies and de la Mare. But it is only rarely, in such verses as Edwin Muir's "The Town Betrayed" or the occasional wryness of Humbert Wolfe, that one gets a sense of real discovery. Most of the verses are competent and many are interesting, but the general impression is that we have heard it all before. In fact, there is a good deal of it in the old Chinese anthology of which Arthur Waley offers a new translation that has all the charm of unassuming simplicity.

ALAS, POOR COUNTRY

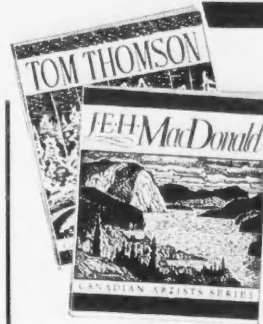
(Continued from page 1)

Englishman than with the Cymric Welsh. In any case, it is curious, as Mr. MacDonnell points out, to see with what passion the Lowlander identifies himself with his defeated and formerly despised cousins, even to the extent of submerging himself in the 51st Highland Division, and turning it, in defiance of all Gaelic fighting traditions, into a stubborn and effective fighting force thoroughly adapted to modern conditions of warfare.

Nowhere does Mr. MacDonnell more tellingly support his thesis than in the whole-hearted gusto with which he records the defeat of the Gael. He usefully explodes a number of flattering myths, like the "heads of departments" legend, pointing out that even if the heads of departments are Scots, the heads of the firms are generally English. And he can hardly be so innocent as to suppose that political autonomy would free Scotland from the domination of English capital any more than it has freed Ireland. But on the whole, though he feels it essential to show his countrymen that the Union no longer pays them a dividend, it is the hope of a reborn self-respect that makes him long for a national freedom as similar as possible to that of the Irish whose indomitable spirit he admires.

SO IT is all the more interesting to turn from the raw violence of the Scot to the subtle malice of the older Irishman, and see what this hard-won freedom can mean. At first, Lord Dunsany seems to be offering us only the rambling literary reminiscences of an elderly gentleman, interspersed with sporting anecdotes. Apparently, even the experience of being jailed by the Black and Tans for snipe-shooting has not lessened Lord Dunsany's fondness for the sport; one soon loses track of the number of birds brought down. But before long it becomes clear that there is some pretty deadly sniping going on as well, covertly, in these innocent pages. Gradually, by imperceptible degrees, there is built up the feeling of a country cut off, narrowing and stagnating into primitive bog again. Gradually we come to realize that the author's attempts to find out what the Irish people really think of their new government will never penetrate the curtain of polite evasions. We begin to wonder if the Scot would stand to gain so much by exchanging the hand of the English oppressor for the hand of the Irish liberator.

Dunsany has never written a more masterly book. He has to an exceptional degree that perfection of style that so often marks the Irishman in English prose, to be clear and simple without being low, or mean. Day after day he goes out to shoot over the bogs, and day by day we accompany him with unflinching interest. The changing weather, as we read, becomes more real to us than the climate in which we sit. And when we pause at a gate, or the edge of a bog, or before a turf fire in the evening, it is to enjoy the perfection of easy, quiet, subtly ironic conversation. The mannerisms that distinguished some of his earlier works have disappeared, but the style, for all its ease, is never just ordinary.



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